1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 190.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open tosuspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. [183] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [076]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [080] [055] [087]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

However, many of the benefits of compulsory education have been vitiated by the policy of cheap education for the poor. The theory and practice of compulsory education makes this quite obvious. Theoretically, the main purpose has been to train the child in the three R's, and to enable him to understand and to appreciate those principles of social life compatible with his own position, and to lead a good and contented life.[1] In practice, the mark of poverty is even more obvious, comparing the building equipment and teachers' salaries of compulsory schools with those of primary and secondary schools. Up to 1948, the latest year for which statistics are available, the appropriations for compulsory elementary education never exceeded 30 per cent of the total expenditure on other types of schools, while it amounted to almost 70 per cent in other countries such as France, the Netherlands, Ireland and England, bearing in mind, of course, that most of these countries had finished a long time ago with the initial expenses on building and equipment.[2] On the other hand, about 10 per cent of the educational expenditure in Egypt in 1936 was devoted to higher education at the University level, while the expenditure in the European countries previously mentioned amounted in the same year to 4 per cent and 6 per cent at the same level. The year 1936 is not an unusual one, as it represents the proportion of educational expenditure which is one of the main reasons for the top-heaviness of the Egyptian educational system, or as it is usually branded, 'the inverted pyramid'.[3]

Thus to throw the blame of the failure of the compulsory school on to the apathy of the fellah is to make a confusion of issues and an easy way out for those who do not think that education is a commodity to be sold, and that such a commodity must be desirable, useful, or appealing in some ways to the customer. Up to 1948 the compulsory elementary school was a separate world in two respects: separate from the real life of the rural population, and separate from the other types of schools which command

Item of food	*Quantity*
Bread	100 grammes
White cheese	10 „
Tomatoes	60 „
Nuts (fool soudani) ..	30 „
Salt	1 „
Cooked beans (fool midamis)	80 „
Oil (No. 1)	10 „
Dried dates	60 „
Boiled eggs	1

[1] *Year Book of Education*, 1939, article by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education on 'Education in Egypt', p. 746.

[2] See *Annuaire Internationale de l'Education et de l'Enseignement*, 1939. The writer is aware of the difficulties involved in such a comparison, but the differences are so striking that they are certainly significant.

[3] See the writer's M.A. thesis on 'An Enquiry into Inequalities of Educational Opportunities in Egypt' (London University, 1949, unpublished).

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX II

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. Last cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Miari	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

434
511
[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product		*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs	..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

[593] The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

APPENDIX III

			Price in £E
Average consumption is then:			
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar	•	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

APPENDIX III

In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kaar el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless.

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.)
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them.

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 •262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn ibliz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

849 463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyût Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *felläh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darábukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghárît*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBÂRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom.

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned.

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat.

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed.

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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead. The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḳḳ*.

On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will say, "*Khud kaḳḳ 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation. It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn.

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants.

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

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Upper Egypt

oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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443
463
262
137
291
516

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shâdûf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭîr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunâfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shâdûf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shâdûf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shâdûf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawâdîf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭâmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

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The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes.

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Upper Egypt

members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sidi Aḥmed el-Bedawi is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Tanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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Upper Egypt

751 754 892 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 781 221 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

[747]

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*sarîḥ*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *sarîḥ* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[749]

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *sarîḥ* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 70 ff.

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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

539

The Work of Women is better than that of Men; or, the Ideas of Women are Superior to those of Men

Once upon a time a judge had a wife who was always telling him that he invariably gave judgment in favour of men and never of women. To this accusation the judge replied, "Oh, my dear wife, I think that women are very inferior to men; they are always in need of our help."

As the judge continued to pay no attention to what his wife said, she became angry with him, and said to herself, "I will find a way in which to punish my husband."

[269]

So one day the wife told her husband to buy some meat and a melon for dinner. After she had prepared these things a friend came, and she offered *him* the meat for his dinner and cooked some lentils for her husband's meal, to take the place of the meat which she had given to her friend. She then cut out the inside of the melon and poured water inside the rind, which had been left whole. She brought also some fish and put them inside the melon-rind in the water.

When her husband came to take his dinner as usual she brought him the lentils.

He was much surprised when he saw this, and said to her, "What is the matter? I bought meat, not lentils."

So she said to him, "This is all that you bought; you must eat it." So he ate.

After he had eaten the lentils she took a knife and began to cut the melon into pieces, and then started laughing. Her husband said, "What is the matter with you?" She replied, "My dear husband, you must come and see the fish which are in this melon."

The man was very surprised to see such a curious thing, and he went outside his house, where there were some people sitting, and said to them, "I have bought a melon inside which there are fish. I shall invite you to eat some of these fish to-morrow."

The next day he sent out his invitations to the people who had promised to dine with him on the fish. When the guests arrived he said to his wife, "Bring the fish!" So she came forward and said, "O my husband, do fish live in melons? What is the matter with you? O people, you must perceive that the judge has become mad!" So they took him to the asylum and made some one else judge in his place.

When they asked the poor man every day the names of the days of the week he repeated them correctly, but when they asked him, "Where do fish live?" he replied, "Fish live in melons."

One day the woman went to visit her husband and said to him, "When they ask you 'Where do fish live?' you must say, 'They live in water, in ponds and rivers and lakes.'" Then they let him go free, and when he arrived at his house the people came to salute him.

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 "and," he continued, "I think, therefore, that we should give her your daughter to be her son's wife."

The King followed this counsel, and sent a message to the camel that he was ready to give him his young daughter. So the camel caused a notice to appear in the papers that he was about to marry the King's daughter, and he invited some of his friends and gave them a supper. After supper they went to the King's palace and brought the bride to the camel's house.

Then the camel placed a sword between him and his bride, and said to her, "I am going to show you a secret thing." Then he took off his skin, and, behold! he was a very beautiful fairy prince with golden hair.

At daybreak the mother of the bride made some nice biscuits for her daughter and also prepared a dish of macaroni, suspecting that the camel would eat it instead of straw. When she came to her daughter to offer her these things, she asked her about the camel. The daughter said, "It is a camel, my mother, not a human being," and did not tell her mother what she had seen at night.

Before the camel went out he brought his wife a gold tray on which were golden dishes full of delicious food, and he ordered her to offer her mother some breakfast, which she was to take to the King's palace.

When the King saw these precious things he was much astonished, and said to his vizier, "Surely this camel is a very rich man; he always offers us precious things which we do not possess."

On the seventh day after the marriage, as is the custom to the present day, the King and his wife took some beautiful presents to offer to their daughter. When they reached the place they found that the cottage was burned down and that no one was to be seen. But the camel had taken his wife, his mother, and his father and had gone to a distant place, where, after he had prayed to God, a beautiful palace, built of gold and silver bricks and surrounded with flowers, arose upon the spot. The palace, also, was protected by a large number of soldiers. Then the camel took off his skin and became the prince of these parts.

After a while the King and his vizier wandered about, dressed as Arabs, trying to find the King's daughter. One day they were passing near the palace when they were observed by the Prince, who ordered one of his soldiers to bring in these strange men, who, he said, doubtless were thieves. And they were cast into prison.

After three days had passed the men were brought before the Prince, and he asked, "Where were you going?" The King and his vizier replied, "We have a daughter whom we married to a camel, and we are trying to find her." The Prince asked, "How can a camel marry a girl?" And the King answered, "I gave him my daughter."

While they were thus speaking the King's daughter looked out of a

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rotls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [262] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *baladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 372] which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

● [262 439] Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle-class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

[312 343] The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoosa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from
[262 June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with
252] oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this
463 diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the
181 fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different
242 matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that
407 there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation between the increase in this "drug habit" and the development of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (*).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (*).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the open air and in company, each taking his food from the plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoosa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*basal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (*), both of

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoosa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread(").

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three
252 inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day.

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoosa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (**) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition.

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it.

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere.

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

7

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwil*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
● [262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
176 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
163 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work.

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work.

41. *T.*—At Akhmim and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan.

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible.

43. Department of Public Health: Reports and Notes on Ankylostomiasis and Bilharziasis in Egypt: Government Press, Cairo, 1924.

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty': El-Rif el Masri (The Egyptian Countryside), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen.

46. See the Annual Report for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the Revue des Questions Sociales (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled Is black tea harmful to the health and work of the peasantry? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer.

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.)

48. Bamia and Molokhia are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as Okra, is

HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS. Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TOLCHORUS OITTORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Albas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOIKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEIS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.
See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAHLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (مطبوخ قشر نارنج).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. TR.]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. [755 787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) [755 782] [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts.

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Sia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver.

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
382 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed].
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rûma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

[192] [776] 5. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salâme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarâmiye (thieves) and 'afârît (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullû ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gôrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[362] [172]

[241] [262] 11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their [858]
parents, but are also their dearest treasures.

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫâi, ḫudni fi-ġêbak,
'arnê fûl aḫḍar.
Leḥne 'izâz,
see-leḥne bêḍa nikkassar.
Dehne ḫawâtim dahab
niḥaṭṭê fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a [291]
pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment.

2. The fresh young pods of the fûl (hog's bean) are re- [262]
garded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4,
note on l. 11.

3. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellâḥ, but [301]
he is fond of having it seen.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539x
461
[264]
[262]

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes.

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'ba-l-'afa-lla!
rawwaḥ, ya mirsāl, 'dwaḍak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

---

d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Maḥmūd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min rādi
wi-t'āl; el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Calls of the Radish-Vender.

539*
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar". (F. Kern.) [114] [538]

Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
nuṣṣ el-balad tišhad-li,
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

CONTINUED
ON
NEXT FICHE

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

55.

Arrogance.

×539 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ruzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Mohammed 'Ali exterminated. For Mahmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

[114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebīʿ er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ṭuzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ṭuzz (Mamaluke).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Flatteries.

75.

×539
832

Ya naʿme, ya belīle,
Yammū šaʿūr, ya ṭawīle.

Thou tender one, so like belīle!
Thou, with the abundant hair, thou slender one!

1. Belīle is a favorite dish prepared from corn, milk and honey. The sweetheart is compared with this delicate, sweet dish.

[262]

76.

Again, as in the preceding song, slender women are meant.

Ya naḫletēn el-ʿalali,
ya balaḥkum dawa!

O ye two palms of the upper chamber,
Your dates are medicine!

Dalman has also these two lines, as a refrain to a love-song. In Dalman's song they run thus (p. 249):

Ya naḫlāt bi-l-ʿalāli	O ye palms of the upper chambers,
ya balaḫḫum dawa	O their dates are medicine,
Ya nūr il-ʿēn.	O light of the eyes!

Dalman heard the song on a steamer running between Bērût and Alexandria.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablieh*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanieh*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed.

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices.

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
285 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[267] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [169] while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony [982] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory [262] of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of [988] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The [174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for 796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that [184] of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast [178] of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fuqus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash [783] themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[716] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorâk*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a
[431] sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters.

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown.

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle.

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall.